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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 000317

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/SPG

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SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: AF ACTING A/S CARTER MEETS WITH
SANT'EGIDIO REPRESENTATIVES

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: AF Acting Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter met Vittorio Scelzo, head of the International Department of the Community of Sant'Egidio (CSE), and Kpakile Felemou, head of the CSE in Guinea, on the margins of the African Union (AU) Summit on 1 February. Discussions focused on Sudan and Guinea. On Sudan, Scelzo commented that Sudan Liberation Movement/Army leader Abdul Wahid Al-Nur had recently told CSE that he was waiting for new policies from Washington before moving forward on any political process. Scelzo also said that Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim had proposed confidential meetings between JEM and the Government of Sudan, a prospect accepted by AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur Djibril Bassole, as well as Sudanese Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie. On Guinea, Carter stressed the United States' commitment to legislative elections before any potential constitutional changes. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Scelzo commented that CSE had been in touch with all of the Darfur rebel groups from the beginning of the Darfur conflict. He recently met Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA) leader Abdul Wahid Al Nur in Paris. Abdul Wahid told CSE that he was waiting for a new policy from the USG. Scelzo assessed that Abdul Wahid was waiting for Washington or The Hague to do his work for him. In response to Carter's question on what the SLA was waiting for, Scelzo said a no-fly zone. Scelzo assessed that the SLA believed a no-fly zone would help it gain territory. Carter asked about the SLA's commitment to the political process, to which Scelzo said that the SLA appeared to be too weak. Scelzo continued that Abdul Wahid only appears to want to say no to all agreements, commenting that the SLA leader had told him that he would only talk when there is security on the ground.

¶3. (C) Scelzo said he also met with rebel leader Sherif Harir, who disparaged Qatari efforts to advance Darfur peace talks. In Scelzo's view, the unity movement was divided and called Ahmad Abd Al-Shafi a weak puppet. He noted, however, that everyone agreed on the need to remove Sudanese President Bashir. Carter asked why Bashir's removal would be good for the political process, to which he replied that no one had ever said how Bashir's removal would help. Carter noted that it sounded like the rebels did not see any utility in political talks. Scelzo said it did not appear so until now. Carter asked if the fact that Qatar was new to the mediation process was a hurdle. Scelzo said it was, but when Carter asked if that was a sincere concern, he commented that the rebel groups appear to want to buy time in order to preserve

maximum flexibility.

¶4. (C) In his meeting with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, Scelzo determined that Ibrahim wanted to be "Mr. Yes" to Abdul Wahid's "Mr. No." JEM is seeking a confidential meeting with the Government of Sudan, a move that Sudanese Presidential Assistant Nafie endorsed in a discussion with SCE. JEM wants to be the sole interlocutor on Darfur issues. Carter saw that option as unrealistic and said it was important to be careful not to reinforce an enlarged self-image in regards to other groups in Darfur. Scelzo said that he was not sure if the confidential meeting would take place, but that SCE would inform the USG if it did.

¶5. (C) On Guinea, Carter said the country should move forward on legislative elections. The formula for moving forward is to have the president of the legislature as interim president until an election can be organized. It is not acceptable for the military to implement constitutional change prior to legislative elections, which should be carried out prior to the summer rainy season. The USG will work to strongly increase pressure on the military in the coming months.

¶6. (U) Acting A/S Carter approved this message.
YAMAMOTO